

**Glenda Wiles**

**From:** Theresa Manzella [tntpaints@3riversdbs.net]  
**Sent:** Friday, December 12, 2008 9:43 AM  
**To:** Glenda Wiles  
**Subject:** Animal Protection Program

Dear Commissioners,

Thank You for taking the time to review Sue Majors concept plan for animal protection this week. I know you're incredibly busy with what many other major priorities affecting our community, so thank you for taking the time to talk with us about the animal welfare situation and the effect on our community.

I wanted to drop you a follow up to my comments at the meeting. Again, as the new kid on the animal welfare scene, I naively came unprepared for public comment, so I find myself wondering who effectively I communicated today.

The number one point I want to be sure I was effective in making the fact that the closing of the slaughter houses will have a profound affect on the number of neglected horses we see in our community THIS winter season and spring. I can not emphasize enough how important I believe it is that we get an animal protection officer in trained and place ASAP.

I'd also like to say that Willing Servants will do all that we can to help the Pet Protection Program promote the dog licensing program. I think it's a GREAT program and a perfect way to pay for the ACO. Getting the word out is a huge undertaking and people need to be educated repeatedly as to what they get in return for their \$10. They get a full time Animal Protection Officer that they can call when they see animals in distress. We're (Willing Servants) is getting a lot of positive press right now...and I try to work the Dog Licensing program into every interview. Sometimes they print it, sometimes they don't. It seems to me, with my fairly new perspective, that the Pet Protection Program needs "someone" to carry this message to the public on a daily basis. When I first learned of the Dog Licensing program and the ordinance, I must admit that my first thoughts were resentful....thinking "There's big brother again...trying to keep better track of me through my dog." I didn't realize I got an APO for my \$10. Maybe it's my fault for being uninformed, but I'm so busy trying to make a living in the Bitterroot Valley...*like so many others*...I somehow missed the part about the APO. I, personally, prefer this means of fundraising to raising our taxes.

I do believe that Kathleen Driscoll hit the nail on the head when she stated that this issue has a lot to with "relationship". I don't think you could have been any more accurate. In my very short involvement, I've witnessed some very strained relationships amongst the players in the animal welfare game. Obviously these people have history with one another and least some of it "not good." It's sad because every single person in the field loves animals and does what they do for the sake of the animals...but yet the animals go "without" in so many cases. We, Willing Servants, have been trying desperately to stay out of the "politics" involved...but must admit that we are finding it difficult in certain circumstances We will be submitting for our 501(c)3 in the next couple weeks, but for at least the short term, we intend to stay "small"...offering our services to people who want them; working without any authority and trying to ***build relationships***, negotiate and talk people out of their animals when it's obvious

that both the animals and the people would be better off without them. It's not the short and easy route...but we do believe it will be the most effective. I do want to share with you that I have personally witnessed Sue Major applying these same tactics successfully. I received a call from John Bell Tuesday night, complementing WS on our efforts. He said that in his experience, the people who need to be "talked out" of their animals vs. those who need to be prosecuted makes up 80% of the animal welfare problem. We're hoping we can make a dent in that figure. We've had many wonderful professional people offer their talents and support of our organization which includes eight different attorneys and a clinical psychologist who has offered her help to us in understanding the minds of people who are holding on to their animals as a means to cover up other emotional issues...and ultimately how to successfully deal with them in a manner that is a win/win/win/, for the animals, for the person and for WS. It will take us awhile to polish our negotiating skills and I'm not so naive to think that we'll "win" 100% of the time, but it is our hope that we can contribute to our community and the animal welfare problem in this manner. Since Oct 11th, we've successfully rehomed 12 horses and mules so we're off to a pretty good start.

In closing, I'd like to reiterate that I would never be so arrogant to think that I have enough knowledge and experience to determine weather or not Sue Major has the skills to be a deputized APO, but I do think the concept seems sound and since the term is for one year, it appears that it would buy the county more time to evaluate the situation AND fill an **immediate** need for the animals and the community. I guess I just don't see anyone else coming up with a better plan.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter.

Theresa Manzella  
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